

Message Text

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FOR THE SECRETARY FROM AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: XF US

SUBJ: BEGIN VISIT

REF: STATE 170055

1. AFTER BILL MAYNES' MEETING WITH FAHMY TODAY, I STAYED BEHIND TO PROVIDE REFERENCE ORAL REPORT ON BEGIN VISIT. I ASKED THAT IT ALSO BE GOTTEN TO SADAT ASAP. I THEN WENT THROUGH THE MESSAGE IN DETAIL WITH FAHMY.

2. FAHMY LISTENED ATTENTIVELY, BUT WAS NOT OVERLY HAPPY WITH THE MESSAGE. HE COMPLAINED THAT HE HAD HEARD MORE ABOUT THE ISRAELI PROPOSAL THROUGH BEGIN'S PRESS STATEMENT THAN HE HAD THROUGH OUR MESSAGE. I REMINDED HIM THAT OUR MESSAGE INDICATES THAT BEGIN HAD DETAILED THE PLAN IN THE PRESS CONFERENCE. WHILE MESSAGE DID NOT SPECIFICALLY SO STATE, ASSUMPTION CLEARLY IS THAT GOE IS AWARE OF THE DETAILS AND THAT THESE NEED NOT BE REPEATED IN MESSAGE.

3. FAHMY STILL INSISTED HE NEEDED TO KNOW WHAT PRECISELY
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BEGIN HAD SAID ON WITHDRAWAL, SPECIFICALLY WITH RESPECT TO SINAI. THE ISRAELIS HAD LEAKED SOMETHING ABOUT IT, BUT GOE WANTS A MORE AUTHORITATIVE VERSION. HE CONTINUED TO CARP THAT ISRAELI PRESS STATEMENTS PROVIDE MORE INFORMATION THAN OUR MESSAGES DO. EVERYTHING IN OUR MESSAGE HAS ALREADY BEEN REPORTED IN THE PAPER EXCEPT WHAT HE CALLED THE "ESSENTIALS OF PEACE." SO FAR AS

THE LATTER ARE CONCERNED, WE COULD DO NO BETTER THAN TO USE THE DEFINITION SET FORTH IN THE EEC STATEMENT. IF THE ISRAELIS ACCEPT THIS, THE MIXED COMMISSIONS COULD MEET TOMORROW.

4. FAHMY REITERATED THAT WHAT HE WOULD LIKE TO HAVE IN ADVANCE OF THE SECRETARY'S VISIT IS THE DETAILS OF THE ISRAELI POSITION ON SIANAI AND THE GOALAN. THIS, HE CONTENDED, IS NECESSARY TO GIVE SADAT AND HIM TIME TO "PREPARE ALTERNATIVES" FOR THE UP-COMING TALKS WITH THE SECRETARY. IT IS UNREASONABLE TO EXPECT GOE TO GIVE IMPRESSIONS ON IMPORTANT MATTERS SUCH AS THESE WITHOUT ADEQUATE TIME FOR REFLECTION. MOREOVER, THE ISRAELIS HAD TALKED ABOUT HAVING SHOWN MAPS TO PRESIDENT CARTER. OUR MESSAGE SAYS NOTHING ABOUT MAPS. IF UP-COMING TALKS WITH THE SECRETARY ARE TO BE PRODUCTIVE, FAHMY ARGUED, GOE NEEDS MORE ADVANCE INFORMATION ON DETAILS.

5. EARLIER IN MY SESSION WITH HIM, WHEN MAYNES WAS STILL PRESENT, FAHMY REFERRED TO BEGIN PRESS CONFERENCE IN WHICH ISRAELI PRIMIN REPORTEDLY SAID ARABS MUST END STATE OF BELLIGERENCY BEFORE GENEVA CONFERENCE. FAHMY SAID THIS WAS OUTRAGEOUS SINCE TO DO SO WOULD MEAN THAT EGYPT LEGALIZES ISRAELI OCCUPATION OF ITS TERRITORY. FAHMY CALLED THE BEGIN STATEMENT A REAL CHALLENGE TO PRESIDENT CARTER BECAUSE IT WAS MADE WHEN HE WAS AN
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OFFICIAL GUEST OF THE PRESIDENT IN WASHINGTON. FAHMY SAID HE EXPECTS SOME COMMENT ON THIS STATEMENT FROM WASHINGTON. IF EGYPT AGREED TO END STATE OF BELLIGERENCY BEFORE GENEVA OR TO DISCUSS IT AS FIRST ITEM, THEN THERE WOULD BE NOTHING ELSE TO DISCUSS. END OF BELLIGERENCY, FAHMY EMPHASIZED, MUST COME AS LAST STEP AFTER WITHDRAWAL. FAHMY ASKED RHETORICALLY HOW HE WAS EXPECTED TO EXPLAIN BEGIN'S STATEMENT TO THE ARAB PUBLIC. HE KNEW IT WAS NOT USG POSITION, BUT BECAUSE BEGIN MADE IT IN WASHINGTON, THE ARAB MAN IN THE STREET BELIEVES IT IS ALSO USG POSITION. IF GOE WERE TO REACT SPONTANEOUSLY TO SUCH STATEMENTS, THEN GENEVA WOULD BE OFF.

6. I RECALLED OUR MEETING OF YESTERDAY IN WHICH I HAD URGED THAT GOE NOT REACT PUBLICLY TO BEGIN'S STATEMENTS. THIS CONTINUES TO BE OUR COUNSEL. I WAS PLEASED THAT GOE HAS NOT REACTED PUBLICLY TO BEGIN STATEMENT AND HOPED IT WOULD XONTINUE EXERCISE RESTRAINT. AS HE KNEW, WE HAD ALSO URGED ISRAELIS MAKE NO FURTHER PUBLIC STATEMENTS. IF PROGRESS IS TO BE MADE, THIS IS CLEARLY THE TIME FOR QUIET DIPLOMACY.
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